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Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security

Letter dated 29 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from Petre Roman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, in his capacity of Chairman-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), regarding the SEECP Summit held at Bucharest on 12 February 2000, which adopted a Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe.

I should be grateful if the text of the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 84.

(*Signed*) Ion **Gorita**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

00-32446 (E) 170300

Annex

Letter dated 28 February 2000 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you in my capacity of Chairman-in-Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), a regional initiative whose primary objective is to strengthen good-neighbourly relations among all the States in South-East Europe with the aim of building this region into an area of peace, security, stability and cooperation.

I am pleased to inform you that the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the region have signed, during their summit meeting held in Bucharest on 12 February 2000, the Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, one of the major political intergovernmental documents ever agreed upon by these countries. The Charter constitutes a genuine code of conduct for relations among the States in the region, as well as a real action programme aimed at enhancing their cooperation in all areas of mutual interest.

I have the honour to officially convey to you a copy of this Charter, bearing the signatures of the President of Romania and the Prime Ministers of the SEECP participating countries present at the Bucharest summit.

As you may wish to note, the Heads of State and Government of the countries participating in the SEECP solemnly reaffirmed their unreserved commitment to the principles and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe emphasizes that the cooperation among the countries of this region shall be founded on the Charter of the United Nations, on the principle of full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the States in the area, on the principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the relevant documents of the Council of Europe, in particular the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

It would be very much appreciated if this Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe were published as a United Nations document, under the item of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly relating to the maintenance of international security, stability and development of South-Eastern Europe.

(*Signed*) Petre **Roman**
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania
SEECP Chairman-in-Office

Enclosure

Charter on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe

PREAMBLE

We, the Heads of State and Government of the countries participating in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP);

representing the freely elected Governments of our peoples,

solemnly reaffirming our unreserved commitments to the principles and the norms enshrined in the UN Charter, as well as in the Helsinki Final Act and the subsequent OSCE documents and in the relevant instruments of the Council of Europe, aiming at promoting good neighborly relations,

determined to further work together to create in our region conditions for the prosperity of our nations in an environment of peace, security, good neighborliness and stability,

strongly determined to overcome divisions and conflicts in our area through a comprehensive and coherent approach of regional cooperation and in close contacts with the other Euro-Atlantic countries and structures,

considering the differences in economic development and the diversity of the specific problems of each country in our region,

stressing the crucial importance of turning the South-Eastern Europe into a region free from violence and instability and building security, prosperity and democratic

civil societies, thus integrating our countries into the Euro-Atlantic family of free and democratic nations,

expressing our political will to pursue the South-East European Cooperation Process on mutually beneficial and equal basis, in a spirit of solidarity and in full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the states in the region,

emphasizing the importance of promoting in our region universal democratic values, respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and the rule of law,

conscious of the present historic opportunity for the development of good-neighborliness, cooperation and stability in our region, created by the elimination of political and ideological divisions in Europe,

emphasizing the European orientation of our countries as an integral part of their political, economic and social development,

expressing our strong belief that European and Euro-Atlantic integration is essential in promoting our countries' common objectives and cannot be complete without the participation of all of our countries,

determined to further develop the South-East European Cooperation Process, originating from the countries of the region, as an expression of their solidarity and as a framework for their concerted efforts to strengthen the ties and cooperation among themselves and with other Euro-Atlantic states and structures;

considering the previous Declarations adopted by the Heads of State and Government and by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs as milestones in the development of this framework coming from within the region,

without prejudice to our countries' obligations under multilateral or bilateral treaties and agreements, in conformity with international law,

Have agreed on the following:

I. SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. The primary objective of the South-East European Cooperation Process – SEECP- is to strengthen the good-neighborly relations among all states in this region, for transforming this region into an area of peace, security, stability and cooperation.

We commit ourselves to firmly act to reach this objective in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, to the benefit of our countries and peoples, of Europe as a whole.

2. We aim to create a South-Eastern Europe whose future lies in peace, democracy, economic prosperity and full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and, to this end, we commit ourselves to continued democratic and economic reform in our countries.

3. We recognize the responsibility of our countries to closely work with the international community to develop and implement a shared strategy for stability and growth of our region.

4. We welcome the adoption of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and we expect all international organizations and institutions involved to work closely with the countries of the region for the successful and timely implementation of its goals.

5. We consider that responses to new security challenges and elimination of their root-causes require efforts in a wide range of areas, as well as strengthening international solidarity, including our participation in conflict prevention and crisis management activities, peace support operations undertaken by the international community, in particular in the framework of the UN, NATO, the OSCE, WEU and other Euro-Atlantic institutions.

6. We welcome the determination of NATO to actively contribute to the building of a more secure and cooperative relationship with and among the countries of the region.

7. The framework of this process comprises political cooperation which includes questions of security and stability, developing economic and environmental cooperation, promotion of humanitarian, social and cultural cooperation, cooperation in the fields of justice, combat against organized crime, elimination of terrorism, illicit drugs, arms and human trafficking.

8. The cooperation among our countries shall be founded on the UN Charter, on the principle of full observance of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the states in our region, on the principles of the OSCE and the relevant documents of the Council of Europe, in particular the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

9. We reaffirm that our Governments are accountable to their citizens and responsible to one another for the implementation of the commitments undertaken

through our countries' membership in the OSCE and which are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all the states in this region. We recognize that the respect for these commitments constitutes one of the foundations of the international relations to which we intend to make a substantial contribution.

II. OBJECTIVES AND MECHANISMS OF COOPERATION

II.1 Enhancement of political and security cooperation

10. We believe that the security of South-Eastern Europe is essential for achieving lasting stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area and that all the states and the peoples in the South-Eastern Europe should enjoy peace and stability and establish normal relations with one another. Our political and security cooperation serving this purpose shall be focused on:

i. Creating peaceful and good-neighborly relations in the region through reconciliation, recognition of the inviolability of the existing international borders and the peaceful resolution of disputes, on the basis of international law; we shall cooperate in the framework of UN, NATO, OSCE and other international fora in developing arms control and regional confidence building measures and mechanisms for security cooperation.

ii. Preventing and putting an end to tensions and crisis as a prerequisite for lasting stability.

11. The major forms of cooperation in the political and security field shall be mainly the following:

a. Promotion of an intensive political dialogue, through regular meetings of the Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Political Directors of the participating countries, as well as sectorial inter-governmental meetings on subjects of common interest, as it may be decided.

b. Encouragement of the inter-parliamentary dialogue, of the direct contacts among the representatives of the civil society, non-governmental organizations and cultural and scientific personalities.

c. Enhanced regional cooperation in the field of security, including the South-East European Defense Ministerial framework and the Multinational Peace Force - South-Eastern Europe as instruments for building confidence and security in the region.

d. Conclusion between the participating countries of multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements, as well as the promotion of domestic measures to overcome the existing potential for conflict.

e. Exchanges of views conducting consultations and, as appropriate, taking joint initiatives on matters relevant to the stability, security and good-neighborly relations in the area, including the implementation of the 10 principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

f. Promotion of confidence building measures in the area and, in particular, the normalization of the relations between all participating countries.

g. While preserving and building upon the existing arrangements, examination within the SEECP mechanisms or in other relevant fora of proposals and ideas for additional measures in order to respond to specific regional needs for prevention of conflicts and easing of tensions, including observation missions, peace-keeping operations or crisis management activities.

h. Active participation to the efforts developed by the international community aiming at consolidating stability and security in the South-Eastern Europe, both in the planning and implementation phases.

II.2. Fostering economic cooperation

12. We are convinced that fostering bilateral, multilateral and regional economic cooperation and between the region and the rest of Europe constitutes an essential dimension of the good-neighborly relations, security and stability in our area. To this end, our joint action shall be concentrated on:

i. Creating viable and vibrant market economy based on sound macro policies, greatly expanded foreign trade and private sector investment, effective and transparent customs and commercial/regulatory regimes, developing strong capital markets and diversified ownership, including privatization, leading to a widening circle of prosperity for all our citizens.

ii. Creating the conditions for individual full integration of our countries into Euro-Atlantic political, economic and security structures.

13. The major instruments, mechanisms and programs for joint cooperation in the economic field are as follows:

a. Trade and investment promotion, including removal of existing obstacles, encouraging free flows of goods, capital and commerce, facilitation of business contacts, harmonization of the legislation with EU standards, further liberalization and harmonization of trade and transport policies, conclusion of trade liberalization agreements and support for the establishment and efficient functioning of the free trade instruments.

b. Improved cross-border cooperation in view of promotion of business cooperation, enterprise development, financial cooperation and cooperation among institutions, representing the business sector, technology transfer and marketing for small and medium size enterprises; cooperation in the fields of tourism and health, particularly the sharing of resources and facilities on a cross-border basis; improvement and facilitation of information and communication flows between border regions, including media.

c. Promotion of comprehensive Programs for development of integrated regional transport infrastructure system, including projects on road, rail, air, maritime, river and lakes, as well as bridges and border-crossing infrastructure construction and development, connecting the transport system of South-Eastern Europe region to Central and Western Europe by the construction of the relevant Pan-European Corridors; rehabilitation and development of Danube as a waterway of an European importance; development of a regional network of oil and gas pipelines, part of the European network; interconnection of high voltage electrical transmission lines within the region and with the Western European system; further modernization of the telecommunication system; cooperation in all aspects of the tourism industry; development of new financial instruments, together with the international community in particular with the international financing institutions required to meet such objectives.

d. Holding of ministerial or other high-level meetings on the development of the infrastructure of the region and of regular inter-governmental meetings, at least once a year, with the participation of the representatives of official agencies, experts and business community, to encourage, monitor and implement current activities and to develop new schemes for the economic cooperation.

e. Establishing, streamlining and activating various joint regional programs, projects, centers and institutions on the basis of cost-

effectiveness, mutual interest and a fair distribution among the regional countries.

f. Encouraging consistently and systematically the official agencies, associations and business community to create and implement cooperative schemes in all areas of common interest.

II.3. Enlargement of cooperation in the fields of human dimension, democracy, justice and combating illegal activities.

14. We recognize the utmost importance of intensifying contacts and cooperation in human dimensions, social and cultural fields, developing democratic institutions and civil society, facilitating free circulation of information and ideas, as well as of citizens. We underline that our countries are attaching the highest priority to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms as an essential basis for good governance, friendship and mutual understanding. In this direction, our common endeavor shall be oriented to:

i. Bringing about mature democratic political processes, based on pluralism, free and fair elections, grounded in the rule of law and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, with legislative branches accountable to their constituents, independent judiciaries and deepening and strengthening of civil society.

ii. Promoting social harmony within our countries and in the region and recognizing the important role which respective national minorities may play as social and cultural bridges between our peoples.

15. The mechanisms and the programs of joint action in these ample areas shall cover:

a. Further development of cooperation in such fields as human dimensions, democratization, justice and rule of law, inter-ethnic tolerance, free circulation of ideas and individuals, youth education, programs to eliminate misperceptions and prejudices, all of them playing a significant role in strengthening stability and security in our region.

b. Support for enhanced cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology, cultural and art, increased exchanges and contacts between journalists and between youth, organized independently or through national associations and educational institutions, sports competitions, festivals and other events in order to bring our nations closer.

c. Respect for cultural heritage and for regional cultures, protection and restoration of monuments, if necessary through mutual assistance, constitutes another dimension in our region, where different cultures have coexisted and flourished. Besides the cooperation in relevant institutions such as UNESCO, Council of Europe and bilaterally, participating countries will seek a more advanced cooperation in these fields through their competent authorities and by encouraging non-governmental organizations in this direction.

d. Well aware of the threats which terrorism, organized crime, illicit drug and arms trafficking constitute for our peoples, as well as for our societies at large, we express our determination to strengthen the cooperation among the participating countries in these fields, by new and effective measures and joint actions and by working together with existing regional and international bodies competent in this direction.

e. Strengthening border controls to combat the activities described above, as well as illegal migration, directing national authorities to a more developed cooperation, as well as coordination and timely information exchange in these fields, as necessary, by conclusion of agreements and other instruments for cooperation; actions in these fields should respect international standards for the protection of individual rights and the freedom of circulation of the citizens, without harassment and discrimination.

f. Cooperation and joint actions for environmental protection, in particular through systematic exchange of information, bilateral and multilateral agreements and concrete common projects mainly in the border areas.

III. FINAL PROVISIONS

16. The South-East European Cooperation Process is a comprehensive framework for regional cooperation. We reaffirm our willingness to closely participate in, and cooperate with all other international organizations and regional initiatives aiming at promoting security, stability, economic and social prosperity in our area, in

particular with UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, the Council of Europe, BSEC, CEI, SECI, the Royaumont Process, and to coordinate our actions in order to avoid unnecessary duplications.

17. Taking into account the specificity of the areas of interest of other regional initiatives and considering that not all participating states of the SEECP may be taking part in such initiatives, we stress the importance of making flexible arrangements for opening relevant schemes and projects to the participation or to the benefit of all regional countries, without prejudice to the charters and regulations of the respective initiatives.

18. The South-East European Cooperation Process is open, by agreement among the participating countries, to the participation in appropriate forms to States which geographically belong to this area and declare their full adhesion to the present Charter.

19. The cooperative arrangements among a limited number of regional partners conforming to the objectives of this Charter, as well as interaction with other regional initiatives, are considered as complementary efforts to the jointly conducted cooperation between our countries as full participants or observers, as it may be relevant.

20. This Charter may be reviewed for the purpose of its updating, upon the proposal by any participating state and with the agreement of all the other participating countries.

21. The procedural aspects and follow-up mechanisms of the SEECP are included in the Annex to this Charter.

Signed at Bucharest, on 12 February 2000.

Mr. Emil Constantinescu | **Mr. Bülent Ecevit** | **Mr.Ljubco Georgievski**

Mr. Ivan Kostov | **Mr. Ilir Meta** | **Mr. Costas Simitis**

Annex

Procedural aspects and follow-up mechanisms of the South-East European Cooperation Process

1. The Heads of State and Government of the countries participating to SEECP will have yearly meetings to review the overall process of cooperation and to offer guidance and recommendations for future activities. The SEECP Summit shall be chaired by the Head of State or Government of the host country.

2. Meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs are the main fora for consultations, management of the cooperation and the advancement of the objectives of the Process. The Ministers will meet at least once a year to conduct political consultations and to promote cooperation on issues of regional stability, security and political and economic cooperation.

3. These meetings will be chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the host country for a period of one year, on a rotational basis. As Chairman-in-Office, he/she may propose additional meetings or other consultative arrangements when circumstances justify or if so asked by his/her colleagues. These meetings can be arranged with restricted participation, for short duration, or on the margin of international events as working meetings.

4. The Committee of Political Directors will be formed by the Political Directors in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Participating States, or by representatives designated for that purpose. The Committee of Political Directors will be chaired by the representative of the host country and will meet every three months, for consultations, for the preparation and follow-up of the Summit and ministerial meetings and to carry out other activities in order to facilitate coordination and consultations on matters of common interest. It will report to the Ministers. The Committee may also be

convened for restricted sessions with the participation of the representatives of the full participating countries only.

5. Due to its role to facilitate coordination and consultation, the Committee will monitor the progress and developments on subjects mentioned in this Charter and on the implementation of the decisions taken by the Summits and ministerial meetings. It will also act as a focal point to prepare and facilitate the task of the Ministers to streamline and enhance cooperation and will conduct consultations on other issues brought to its attention by members.

6. The Committee of Political Directors may establish expert groups and task forces on areas of cooperation indicated in the ministerial decisions.

7. Sectorial ministerial or high officials meetings may be organized upon decisions or recommendation of the Summit or Foreign Ministers meetings. The Sectorial meetings may be organized by any of the participating country which launched such initiatives.

8. In order to assure the continuity of the activities, a Troika of the SEECP will be set-up at the ministerial level, political directors and other high officials levels. The Troika, formed by the representatives of the current, past and future SEECP Chairman-in-Office, performs fact-finding and observation missions or any other tasks entrusted to them by the ministerial meetings.

9. The Chairman-in-Office will nominate a coordinator and the participating countries will nominate representatives, as contact points, in order to facilitate correspondence, to collect national contributions and relevant information.

10. The Chairman-in-Office or his representative will represent the SEECP in the meetings of other international organizations and regional initiatives, when invited.

11. Secretarial services will be provided by the country of the Chairman in Office and, when necessary, with the assistance of other participating countries.

12. Decisions of the meetings of the Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Political Directors, including those regarding the participation, are taken by consensus, which is understood as absence of objection.

13. The chairman of the Committee of Political Directors will prepare and distribute before the meeting a draft report on the activities and on the agenda items. The chairman and the members may also present non-binding, informative working papers to the Committee.

14. The SEECP is open to the countries in the South-Eastern Europe. These countries could take part in the meetings of Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Political Directors, as full participants or observers, as they may wish and following the decisions taken by consensus.

15. The plenary sessions of the SEECP ministerial meetings may be attended by special invitees representing countries outside the region and international organizations or regional initiatives. The invitations will be sent by the Chairman-in-Office by agreement among the participating countries.

16. The observers and the special invitees to the SEECP plenary meetings may take the floor, if they so wish, with prior consultation with the participating countries.

17. The SEECP, through the Chairman-in-Office, will maintain working contacts with other international organizations and regional initiatives.

18. The Chairman-in-Office may inform interested countries outside the region, as well as the international organizations and regional initiatives, on the deliberations in the SEECP meetings, the common positions and the documents adopted on matters of common concern.